

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 EAE-00 ACDA-10 PM-04 NSC-05
SS-15 H-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 DHA-02
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O 112215Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3176

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, KS

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S SEOUL PRESS CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT TRANSCRIPT ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HOLBROOKE'S PRESS CONFERENCE SEOUL APRIL 11:

BEGIN TEXT

MENARD: GENTLEMEN, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY ONLY HAS A FEW
MOMENTS, SO WE WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. HE HAS A SHORT, OPENING
ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE, AND THEN WILL ENTERTAIN YOUR QUESTIONS.

HOLBROOKE: I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE IN KOREA FOR THE FIRST
TIME SINCE THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER. THE AMBASSADOR
SUGGESTED THAT WE MEET BRIEFLY WITH THE PRESS THIS AFTERNOON SO
THAT I COULD MAKE A BRIEF COMMENT ABOUT WHAT I AM DOING HERE AND
ABOUT US-KOREAN RELATIONS. FIRST OF ALL, THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL
TRIP WITH A LENGTHY AGENDA OF ITEMS FOR ME TO DISCUSS WITH THE
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REPUBLIC OF KOREA; I CAME HERE PRIMARILY TO CATCH UP WITH A
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION HEADED BY CONGRESSMAN LESTER WOLFF,
CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE, THAT IS CONCERNED WITH ASIA. I WILL BE TRAVELLING
WITH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF FOR THE NEXT WEEK IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND
THIS WAS THE MOST CONVENIENT PLACE AT WHICH TO CATCH UP WITH HIM.
HOWEVER, SINCE I WAS HERE THE AMBASSADOR AND I DID CALL ON THE

FOREIGN MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON IN A BRIEF COURTESY CALL. WE WILL BE HAVING BRIEF CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER KOREAN OFFICIALS WHILE I'M HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SEVERAL COMMENTS ABOUT US-KOREAN RELATIONS WHILE I'M HERE TODAY. THE FIRST ONE IS TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, PRESIDENT CARTER, HAS ALREADY REAFFIRMED, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS SECURITY COMMITMENT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. THE PRESIDENT HAS SPOKEN OFTEN AND WITH CONVICTION OF HIS OWN PERSONAL ADMIRATION FOR THE RESILIENCE AND COURAGE OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND OF THE ECONOMIC, GREAT ECONOMIC PROGRESS THAT KOREA HAS MADE IN RECENT YEARS. THE PRESIDENT HAS ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT HE INTENDS TO HONOR A PLEDGE THAT HE MADE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, THAT HE WILL WITHDRAW, IN A GRADUAL, CAREFUL, AND CAUTIOUS MANNER, AMERICAN GROUND TROOPS FROM KOREA OVER THE NEXT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS. THE DETAILS OF THIS WITHDRAWAL HAVE NOT BEEN WORKED OUT YET, AND FORMAL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAVE NOT YET BEGUN, BUT I THINK OUR COUNTRY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, BOTH WOULD HOPE THAT THE DISCUSSIONS COULD BEGIN SOMETIME NEAR THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR. I'D BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE.

MENARD: QUESTIONS PLEASE.H

HOLBROOKE: OR, IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS THAT ARE TOO DIFFICULT, I WILL ASK THE AMBASSADOR TO ANSWER.

SPEAKER: YOU MET WITH MINISTER PARK THIS AFTERNOON, COULD YOU EXPLAIN TO US WHAT YOU TALKED WITH HIM ABOUT? WHAT KOREAN QUESTION? UNCLASSIFIED

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AND SECOND QUESTION IS, THERE IS A FEAR THAT THE US TROOP WITHDRAWAL PLAN IS PART OF THE US WORLD STRATEGY TO LET INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST COMMUNISTS, IS IT TRUE?

HOLBROOKE: IN REFERENCE TO YOUR FIRST QUESTION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF KOREA WAS IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY, AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE INVITED HIM TO LUNCH AND HE MET WITH THE PRESIDENT. TODAY, I THINK HE WAS RETURNING THE HOSPITALITY AND WE WANTED TO SAY "HELLO"; IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DISCOURTEOUS NOT TO VISIT. WE SIMPLY WENT BACK OVER THE SAME MATTERS WE HAD DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON AND REALLY, BASICALLY, WE JUST REVIEWED WHERE... WHAT WE HAD DONE ON THE WASHINGTON TRIP. AND, I THINK YOU SHOULD ADDRESS ANY OTHER QUESTIONS YOU HAVE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, ABOUT THAT. IN REGARD TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION, UNITED STATES' DESIRE TO WITHDRAW GROUND TROOPS FROM KOREA IS NOT PART OF A WORLDWIDE STRATEGY OF WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES, RATHER; FIRST OF ALL, THERE IS NO SUCH STRATEGY. THAT IS A VERY IMPORTANT POINT I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN REGARD TO US TROOPS IN EUROPE, I WOULD POINT OUT TO YOU THAT

THE, WHEREAS A FEW YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A FAMOUS AMENDMENT BY SENATOR MANSFIELD TO WITHDRAW TROOPS, THAT AMENDMENT IS NOT EVEN BEING SUBMITTED ANYMORE AND DEBATED IN THE CONGRESS. SO THERE IS NO STRATEGY OF THAT SORT. IN REGARD TO KOREA ITSELF, IT IS THE PRESIDENT'S BELIEF THAT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IS IN THE COURSE OF A FORCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WHICH WILL ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO REMOVE ITS TROOPS WITHOUT CREATING AN UNSTABLE SITUATION. THIS IS NOT AN INVITATION TO NORTH KOREA, TO ATTEMPT TO UNIFY KOREA BY FORCE OF ARMS. THIS IS A GRADUAL PROGRAM WHICH WOULD BE DONE BECAUSE OF THE IMPROVING CAPABILITY OF THE FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

SNEIDER: I MIGHT ADD... I THINK IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING, WE ARE MAINTAINING OUR AIR FORCES HERE AND IT IS NOT A WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES FROM KOREA; IT IS ONLY ONE ELEMENT OF THE US FORCES. THERE IS A VERY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.

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SPEAKER: WHAT EXACTLY IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTH KOREAN THREAT?

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HOLBROOKE: WELL, THE ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTH KOREANS IS THAT THEY STILL APPEAR TO DESIRE TO ACHIEVE THEIR STATED POLITICAL ENDS BY AGGRESSIVE USE OF FORCE AND THAT THIS REQUIRES US, IN TURN, TO MAINTAIN OUR VIGILANCE AND TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN OUR SECURITY COMMITMENT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. WE HAVE STATED PUBLICALLY; WE HAVE STATED PRIVATELY, THAT WE WOULD HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE DIFERENCES BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA. WE HAVE UNFORTUNATELY NOT SEEN EVIDENCE THAT MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION IS DESIRED BY NORTH KOREA.

SPEAKER: DO YOU THINK AN EMERGENCY EXISTS ON THE PENINSULA?

HOLBROOKE: AN EMERGENCY? WELL, THAT'S A SEMANTIC QUESTION. THE SITUATION THAT EXISTS ON THE PENINSULA SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. AND, IF YOU WANT TO CALL IT AN EMERGENCY YOU MAY. SOME PEOPLE WOULD; SOME PEOPLE WOULDN'T. IT'S CERTAINLY ONE OF THE PLACES IN THE WORLD TODAY WHERE TENSIONS ALWAYS EXIST, AND WHERE TWO HOSTILE ARMIES FACE EACH OTHER, AND THAT'S AN UNUSUAL SITUATION; AN UNCLASSIFIED

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UNNATURAL ONE IN MY OPINION, AND AN UNDESIRABLE ONE.

SPEAKER: HOW DO YOU THINK HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS HERE?

HOLBROOKE: EXCUSS ME?

SPEAKER: HOW DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE PRESENT SITUATION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS HERE IN KOREA?

HOLBROOKE: WELL, LET ME SAY IN REGARD TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION WHICH HAS CREATED SO MUCH COMMENT AND CONTROVERSY LATELY, THE PRESIDENT HAS A WORLDWIDE CONCERN ABOUT THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THAT THE PRESIDENT ALSO BELIEVES THAT AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, ITS LEADING PUBLIC SPOKESMAN, HE MUST AND SHALL SPEAK OUT ABOUT HIS WORLDWIDE CONCERN. LET ME ADD THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED ITS CONCERNS ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KOREA.

SPEAKER: IN MEETING WITH THE KOREAN OFFICIALS, DID YOU MENTION ANYTHING ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS?

HOLBROOKE: NOT TODAY, NO.

SPEAKER: ON MARCH 12TH, YOU TOLD A HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE THAT US GROUND FORCES IN KOREA WOULD BE PHASED OUT AFTER ENSURING THAT THE SECURITY OF KOREA IS IN NO WAY THREATENED. WITH REGARD TO THIS STATEMENT, HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONTACT WITHIN

US GOVERNMENT AND RED CHINA, RUSSIA, OR NORTH KOREA IN CONNECTION WITH THE EXPECTED WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS?

HOLBROOKE: WITH REGARD TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, IN OUR ROUTINE CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON, WE EXPLAINED TO THEM, AS WE HAVE EXPLAINED PUBLICLY, THIS ISSUE AND WE HAVE SAID EXACTLY TO THEM IN PRIVATE, WHAT WE HAVE SAID PUBLICLY. IN REGARD TO NORTH KOREA, THE ANSWER IS "NO".
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AND IN REGARD TO THE SOVIET UNION, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT CAME UP DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S TRIP TO MOSCOW, RECENTLY, BUT I AM NOT A HUNDRED PERCENT SURE. I DON'T THINK IT WAS A MAIN... I DON'T THINK IT WAS ON THE AGTND.

MENARD: GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE TIME FOR JUST ONE MORE QUESTION.

SPEAKER: IN JAPAN, MR.... (NAME INDISTINCT) HAD CONFERENCE AND HE MENTIONED THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF THREE NATIONS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE AMERICAN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL. DO YOU FORESEE ZNY...THAT KIND OF MEETING IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

HOLBROOKE: WHICH NATIONS DID HE TALK? I HAVE NOT SEEN A STATEMENT.

SPEAKER: KOREA, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED STATES.

HOLBROOKE: I AM SORRY; I HAVE NOT SEEN HIS STATEMENT, SO I CAN'T COMMENT ON IT. LET ME JUST ADDRESS THE BASIC QUESTION. THE QUESTION OF US TROOPS IN KOREA IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A QUESTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND WE WILL CONSULT WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FIRST, BEFORE ANYTHING IS DONE, AND BEFORE WE CONSULT WITH OTHER NATIONS. IT IS OF COURSE, IT IS ALSO A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST TO OTHER NATIONS, IN THE PACIFIC, AND INDEED, IN THE WHOLE WORLD. WE WILL CONSULT WITH THEM AND THE FIRST OF THOSE OTHER NATIONS, WITHOUT QUESTION, IS JAPAN. SO OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM WILL BE AS CLOSE AS APPROPRIATE.

SPEAKER: MR. SECRETARY, HOW DO YOU CATEGORIZE US-KOREAN RELATIONS AFTER SERIES OF THESE DISPUTES WHICH DID NOT APPEAR QUITE SETTLED? DO YOU QUALIFY THE FORMER RATHER COOL, OR EXCELLENT, OR SUPERB?

HOLBROOKE: WELL, WE SHOULD HAVE STOPPED ONE QUESTION EARLIER. I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT AND MY ANSWER TO THAT IS THAT WE HAVE NOT HAD A SERIOUS DISPUTE WITH KOREA, IN MY OPINION, IN THE LAST TWO AND A HALF MONTHS. I THINK THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE
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KOREAN GOVERNMENT, RIGHT NOW, ARE VERY GOOD, AND WE HAVE VERY CLOSE CONTINUING TIES. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD A VERY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED WITH MANY OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TOOK TIME OUT TO SEE HIM? NORMALLY THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT SEE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF COUNTRIES THAT VISIT, BUT HE WANTED TO SEE FOREIGN MINISTER PARK. WE HAVE CONTINUING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS; THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED AMBASSADOR SNEIDER TO REMAIN ON AS HIS AMBASSADOR IN KOREA AND THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT IS ABOUT TO SEND A NEW AND VERY SENIOR AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT TO WASHINGTON AS THEIR AMBASSADOR. OUR RELATIONS ARE EASY AT ALL LEVELS AND I AM VERY SATISFIED WITH THEM RIGHT NOW AND FOR ME AND MY OWN WORK, PERSONALLY, IT IS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE TO WORK CLOSELY AND CONTINUOUSLY WITH THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. END TEXT.
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